

Appl. No. 09/372,459
Amendment with Restriction Election
Reply to Office action of 21 April 2003

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REMARKS/DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

Claims 1-6 are pending in the application.

Applicant(s) respectfully request(s) the Examiner to acknowledge the claim for foreign priority and receipt of any certified copies of priority document(s) provided earlier.

The Office action restricts the invention to one of the following groups of claims:

- I. claim 2;
- II. Claim 3; and
- III. Claim 4.

The Office action also states that claims 1, 5, and 6 are currently generic.

In response, applicant(s) provisionally elect(s), with traverse, to prosecute the species of claim(s) 2, along with generic claims 1, 5, and 6.

Applicants' traversal is based at least on the fact that the three dependent method claims are so closely related that searching all three at once would not impose an undue burden on the Examiner.

MPEP § 803 - Restriction - When Proper

... If the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions.

The claims are amended for non-statutory reasons, to place them in standard U.S. patent practice format, and to put the features of claim 5 directly into claim 6 (rewritten as an independent claim) instead of merely stating "as claimed in claim 5" in claim 6. No new matter is added.


Examination of the application on its merits is now respectfully requested. If any points remain in issue that may

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best be resolved through a personal or telephonic interview,
the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the
undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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